

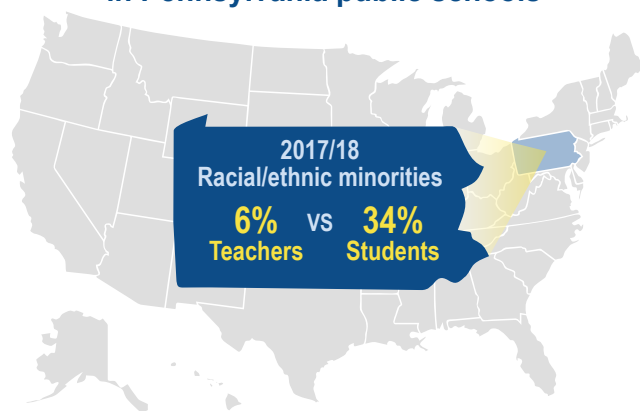


10 factors to consider when implementing teacher and principal residency programs

Many states, including Pennsylvania, struggle with persistent staffing shortages in certain districts and teaching positions, and with limited diversity in their teacher and principal workforces.

Teacher and principal residency programs have emerged as potentially promising ways to address these issues.¹ Residency programs offer longer, more intensive clinical practice than traditional teacher or principal preparation programs. Rather than focusing on candidates majoring in education, they often seek to recruit candidates who are recent college graduates in other fields or mid-career professionals.² Successful residents may also be hired for full-time positions in the schools or districts where they did their residencies. Yet, while residencies appear promising, research on the effectiveness of these programs and their implementation is scarce.³

Educator diversity is limited in Pennsylvania public schools⁴



The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) is awarding grants to support the development, implementation, and expansion of teacher and principal residency programs in the state. In 2019/20, it provided grants to programs at the following institutions:

Teacher residency	Principal residency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PennState Harrisburg CLARION UNIVERSITY Drexel UNIVERSITY Indiana University of Pennsylvania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEHIGH UNIVERSITY Millersville University RMU ROBERT MORRIS Penn UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

In partnership with PDE, REL Mid-Atlantic studied these eight programs early in their implementation to begin to explore the diversity of the programs' residents, whether the programs were addressing shortages, the implementation of the programs, and how the implementation could be improved. To answer these questions, in fall 2020 and winter 2021 we interviewed program staff and conducted focus groups with former residents and mentors.

Here are 10 of the key findings from the study:



Teacher residencies



Recruiting residents of color was difficult in rural areas. Programs in rural areas struggled to recruit residents of color because the populations at their universities and surrounding areas were not diverse.



Communication between program faculty, residents, and mentors was important.

Residents and mentors wanted programs to provide clear expectations for the residency and to keep mentors informed on residents' coursework so the mentors could use the residency activities to support and build on the coursework. Residents also wanted information on the timing and amount of financial aid.



Sustaining financial aid was a concern when partner districts were not paying residents a salary. In these programs, financial aid was particularly important because some residents could not afford to participate full time without additional income.



Selecting mentors who could provide feedback effectively was important. Several participants said it was very important to select mentors who could explain their teaching practices well, communicate with residents openly, and provide constructive feedback and concrete examples.



Balancing the time commitment of the coursework with the residency was a challenge. Residents wanted to be in their residency classrooms as much as possible but found it difficult to balance the residency and the coursework. Possible solutions included shifting coursework to before the residency year, and shortening the courses and offering them in the first half of each semester during the residency.



Principal residencies



Extensive collaboration between programs and partner districts was crucial. Partner districts played a large role in selecting residents, choosing residency schools and mentors, and matching residents with mentors.



Communication between program faculty, residents, and mentors was important.

Similar to the teacher residencies, principal residents and mentors wanted programs to clearly state expectations and keep mentors informed on residents' coursework so the mentors could use the residency activities to support and build on the coursework.



Institutions needed sufficient time before the start of the school year to implement programs.

Recruiting residents and mentors, building relationships with partner districts, planning residencies, and training mentors take time. Some institutions reported difficulties executing their programs because they were only given a few weeks' notice before the start of the school year to begin implementing their programs.



Recruiting principal residents was difficult. Many principal residents were current teachers and partner districts had to replace them before they could participate in the principal residency program. Finding replacement teachers was sometimes difficult.



Residents appreciated opportunities to observe and learn from multiple principals. They found visits with multiple principals helpful to broaden their exposure to school leadership approaches.

See the [full report here](#) for additional details and for other study findings.

Endnotes

¹ Garrison, n.d.; Papay et al., 2012; Silva et al., 2015; Wan et al., 2021

² Guha et al., 2016

³ Guha et al., 2016

⁴ PDE, 2018

References

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